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Growing Pains in Russia

By Rev. Ernest A. Yarrow

With an INTRODUCTION
by Rev. Fred Field Goodsell

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• A QUARTERLY •

A Word

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Good Things in Anticipation

The ENVELOPE SERIES has no cold storage plant. Its issues contain fresh material, timely and prepared for the purpose. But it is not conducted without a plan or without some anticipation for the future. To encourage prospective subscribers, who may not be familiar with the quality of this publication, here are indicated a few anticipations:

1. A number on the Czecho-Slovaks, with articles by prominent leaders of the new Republic and a chapter on the missionary outlook.
2. A Play about China, with pictures and directions for acting; prepared by Rev. Harry S. Martin of North China.
3. How India Adapts Christianity. A Story of the orientalizing of our religion, which was originally oriental. By Rev. Alden H. Clark.
4. A number on Making Over Turkey; compiled from reports of what is just being begun.

FOREWORD

Russia is the great problem of the hour; a terror to herself and a menace to the rest of the world. Lawlessness, cruelty and crime, smeared over with the magic name of Democracy, are producing intellectual chaos in addition to political, social and economic anarchy. And the vicious forces thus generated are spreading over Europe and America. Russia drifting, is an object of world concern.

This number of the ENVELOPE SERIES is a contribution to the understanding of Russia and her present need. Messrs. Yarrow and Goodsell are two keen-eyed and true-hearted missionaries of the American Board. Both have had the enlightening experience of years of life and work in Turkey; and fresh and intimate contact with conditions in Russia, particularly in Siberia. Mr. Yarrow has left Russia to return to work in the reconstruction of Turkey. Mr. Goodsell has just reached the United States from his work in Vladivostock.

Their message to their countrymen deserves to be read and pondered.

W. E. S.

Growing Pains in Russia

INTRODUCTION

BY REV. FRED FIELD GOODSSELL

Mr. Yarrow gives us a very realistic description of conditions in Siberia, but it would be a grievous mistake for any Christian world-citizen to be a pessimist concerning Russia in spite of its present disorganization. Quite the contrary, there is every reason for one who inherits and cherishes Christ's viewpoint as to the development of the Kingdom to rejoice that after many days, the moribund, though tenacious autocracy of the Romanoffs has given way to a hopeful revolution in which the tides of brotherhood and democracy are bound to win.

It is not easy to be fairminded in thinking of Russia today. Even those who have spent many months in revolutionary Russia, find it hard to attain the real facts and still harder to arrive at a measurably balanced interpretation of them. The incidents of any social struggle often obscure the ultimate issues. Many of these incidents in the Russian Revolution are chapters of horrors, but nothing that has happened so far or is likely to happen in the way of terrorism can be relatively but a small price for Russia's millions to pay for genuine democracy. Bolshevism is to be credited with a convincing demonstration of its own unfitness to prevail in Russia or in any other country. In the logical process of history, that is a great gain. Untried Bolshevism would always be a powerful lurking menace.

The elements of stability in the government of Russia may not assert themselves for several years. But they do exist in spite of the present chaos. The peace-loving, industrious peasantry has yet to assert its will. The passion for education which pervades every city and hamlet cannot be smothered. The quickened conscience of the laboring classes will not permit them to be misled and mistreated always by demagogues. The Russian Orthodox Church is learning through great trial, new ways of ministering and new reasons for ministering to the life of the masses. These and other aspects of Russia's national life may be relied upon for a hopeful issue into the new day.

America ought to furnish more intelligent and sympathetic friends for Russia than any other country. A nation, like an individual when racked with pain, craves the fellowship and sympathy of a friend who deeply understands. How fitting it is that those who know the abiding traditions of liberty-seeking pilgrims should refuse to be stampeded into any hasty judgment concerning other pilgrims of liberty.

These are therefore days when the great Christian churches of America should lead in the effort to uphold our President in his policy of disinterested friendship for Russia. That policy, if fully adhered to, would never have permitted a single American soldier to land on Russian soil. Military intervention creates more enmity than it conquers. Second to understanding sympathy and a disposition to reserve judgment, Christian statesmanship demands from us the support of every effort to aid Russia economically and educationally at the present time. Aid of that sort is the best religious and moral help we can give them now. The American Red Cross, The Young Men's and Young Women's Christian Associations, the War Trade Board, which should become in

some form or other, a Peace Trade Board, and the Corps of American Railroad Engineers in Russia are the kind of agencies America may depend upon to express effectively our friendly attitude and our desire to help in every right way. We cannot ship to Russia a hundred thousand tons of national integrity any more than a big brother can give three pounds of character to his wayward companion. That must be self-won. Nor is this any time for any missionary board in America to think of entering Russia. In my mind, it is doubtful whether it will ever be wise for Protestant or Catholic missionaries to enter Russia except on the basis of a friendly understanding with the representatives of the Russian Church. The issues at stake are too momentous to be complicated further by sectarian ambition under the guise of missionary enthusiasm. We should trust the Lord to make it very plain when Russia needs more sectarianism than it already has.

But how significant is the challenge to our Christian conscience and heart and will, wrapped up in the opportunity which America has in this decade to call forth the best that is in Russia for her own healing. Look forward a few years to the day when Russia will send its young men and young women by the thousand to study our democratic institutions and to return to build their spirit into the life of Russia. Look forward to the day when recognized Christian leaders from America will be invited to join with Russian Christian leaders in making religion a more vital factor in the life of all nations, including ours and theirs. Such results as these will be realized on an adequate scale only if we consistently refuse to take advantage of Russia in the hour of her deep distress and think only of the help which a sense of brotherhood and justice would offer.



BOX CAR ON SIBERIAN RAILWAY IN WHICH CZECHO-SLOVAKIAN TROOPS LIVED AND TRAVELED

A SURVEY OF SIBERIA

BY REV. ERNEST A. YARROW

It is very difficult to give an orderly impression of conditions which are disorderly. If I might put the Siberian situation in one word I would say *disorganization*, absolute disorganization, no matter from what angle you look at it; political, social, economic, transportational, financial, and religious. Of course all these categories intermingle and overlap each other until their boundaries are lost; and the one which is most apparent everywhere and which the people feel most keenly is the

ECONOMIC DISORGANIZATION.

I noticed in Siberia the same conditions that I found in the Caucasus; the almost total absence of manufacturing. And I suppose the causes are the same—the insecurity of capital invested in the provinces and the difficulty of getting protection for these industries from the Petrograd Government.

There seemed to have been an influence emanating from such centres as Moscow which pulled wires to keep in definite centres the working of raw materials into finished products. While the transportation facilities were in working order, this did no great harm, except in adding to the cost of manufactured articles; but when transportation ceased, the result was tragic, as the raw materials were left on the hands of the producers and they could neither sell them nor use them.

During the first years of the war, Siberia was the least troubled section of Russia, as it produced great supplies of food stuffs and there were still stocks of manufactured articles for which it could exchange them. As time went on, these stocks were depleted, with the result that

prices of such things went higher and higher, and with them rose, of course, the prices of the necessities of life. At present, it is almost impossible to buy shoes, clothing, implements or medicines. Shoes cost from \$30 to \$100, and a suit of clothes from \$100 up. It is not difficult to figure out how much a farmer must get for his butter and eggs in order to cope with these prices.

But the farmer class is not the one which is hardest hit. The general report is that the farmers have more money than they know what to do with and that they tie it up in bundles and weigh it out. This of course is an exaggeration, but there is some truth at the bottom of it.

The class that is hard hit is the wage earning one. The raise in a workman's pay is not commensurate with the soaring of the prices of what he eats and what he wears; and the crippling of trade makes his services less indispensable. There is possibly enough food in Siberia to feed the population, but there is nothing with which to buy it and no way of distributing it. Some sections have plenty and at fairly reasonable rates, while a town one or two hundred miles away will be nearly starving.

Apart from agriculture, the principal source of the wealth of Siberia is her mines, and here again she has been very badly disabled. Before the Czecho-Slovaks took control, Bolshevism was as rampant in Siberia as in any other part of Russia. The mines were taken over by the workers and the owners were lucky if they got off with whole skins. At present, I believe the owners have regained control, but owing to the demand for high wages, the high cost of material, and the lack of transportation, the mines have ceased to be paying investments.

In short, the present economic situation is bad enough to account for much of the trouble in Siberia, but un-

fortunately there are many other knots in the tangle to unravel.

THE QUESTION OF CASH

One can hardly realize the tremendous importance which a stable currency holds in the life of a people, until he sees the confusion into which the lack of it has thrown the Russians. One is bewildered with the different kinds of



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money one has to handle in any ordinary transaction. There is the old Nicolai or "good" money which is worth about 20% of its original value; then comes the Kerinsky, or "bottle label" variety, which gets its value from no one knows where; next, the money issued by different provinces, or cities with no backing whatever. While I was in Omsk, the Omsk Government issued some millions also without any backing; and a day or two after the issue

was made, this Government fell. Postage stamps have been converted into currency by the simple process of stating the fact on the backs of them; coupons from much depreciated war bonds are another prolific source for ready cash; and the final and most astonishing forms are the individual issues by banks, restaurants, commercial houses and private individuals!

Metal currency in the form of gold, silver, or copper has simply ceased to exist. The effect of this confusion is to paralyze all forms of trade. Even if a producer has an article which he could sell, he would rather hold on to it than convert it into paper, concerning the value of which he rightly entertains the gravest of doubts. One of the very greatest needs of Siberia today and the one in which she can be helped only by outside nations, is that of *goods*. She has money, of the variety mentioned above, but no sane merchant will agree to furnish her with materials in exchange for such trash.

Her banks remain open, but the only individuals darkening their doors are those who made deposits years ago and are now using every art of persuasion and threat to get them back again.

THE DISORGANIZATION OF TRANSPORTATION

There is only one railway line through Siberia, including the military loop to the North along the Amur River; previous to the war, this road, although run on antiquated methods, still met the needs of the country very well. Considering the tremendous distances, it will at once be seen that the very life of the region depends on the efficient upkeep of this means of communication.

The thing that astonishes the student of Siberian affairs most, is the fact that, in spite of all the changes, most of them for the worse, that have taken place, the road is still

running. It is a tribute either to a splendid organization of former times or to the loyalty of the men employed. Too much cannot be said in praise of the engineers and trainmen who have stood by their jobs in spite of all sorts of dangers, in spite of inadequate and unpaid wages, and under the influence of constant Bolshevik propaganda.

When I came through, the latter part of November, the men beyond Irkutsk had not had any pay for three months and about 3,000,000 rubles were due them. This neglect was beginning to tell on their morale and there was grave danger that the whole road would be tied up by a strike. The head of our train was very anxious to get back to Vladivostock at the earliest date possible and he had frequently to "jolly up" the station-masters with presents of cigars, money or other commodities. It took us about twenty-four days to go from Omsk to Vladivostock and in ordinary times it would have taken nine or ten days or possibly less.

The rolling stock is in the worst possible condition, as very few repairs have been made since the war began. There are between two and three hundred American engineers located on the Manchurian line from Vladivostock to Manchuria station. They were invited over by the Kerinsky Government, I think, but the Government changed hands before they were able to take control, and although they have been there for about two years, they have never been able to do anything officially. They are now acting in an advisory capacity; but the officials of the road use their own judgment in accepting any suggestions made. One great difficulty, as everywhere in Siberia, is the grafting qualities of high officials. If an American suggests improvements whereby economies may be practiced, he runs up against some high official who has an interest in keeping things as they are.



TRANS-SIBERIAN ROLLING STOCK

Flat cars loaded with military supplies, machine gun stands, etc.

RAILWAY REVENUE

The most serious problem is the falling off of revenue. No general freight is being carried and the passenger service is all but abandoned. Thousands of box cars are kept out of commission by the fact that they are occupied by refugees, who live in them for weeks and weeks, and no one seems to have the initiative or authority to put them out. Practically all of the activity of the road consists in hauling troops, supply trains for the Red Cross and Y. M. C. A., and all sorts of so-called "Missions" of investigation. So far as I know, none of these organizations pay a cent for their transportation.

A great number of trains are always being used to carry Czech soldiers, Japanese, French, British, Italian and Chinese soldiers. I have understood that the Americans pay when they ship troops, but this very rarely happens, as they stick pretty close to Vladivostock, which is about 4,000 miles from the front.

The principal activity of the Allies seems to be "investigating." Train after train of some special Commission goes by, and when it has gone the length of the road and back, its information is so stale and the situation is so changed that another "Mission" has to be sent out.

It seems that almost anyone can get a special car, or a special train if he is insistent enough. At Irkutsk, we found an old Scotchman who had worked his way through from Petrograd. He had commandeered a box car, raised the British flag over it and chalked in large letters on the sides, "British war mission," and he was getting away with it! We hitched him on to our train and brought him to Vladivostock with us.

The Red Cross and the Y. M. C. A. would each have three or four special trains going at one time on different sections of the road. You can imagine the attitude of the

train men working these trains! When I left, the Red Cross was considering seriously the question of supplying these trainmen at least with clothing, but as yet, so far as I know, this has not been done.

POLITICAL DISINTEGRATION

One has only to review the progress of events in order to be persuaded how absolute disorganization is here. *After* the Allies had occupied Vladivostock, the citizens of that town elected a Bolshevik mayor; and when the Czech General Gaida was made a sort of military dictator, General Horvath, a Russian, refused to accept his authority in the Harbin district; with the formation of the Omsk Government, it was thought that a stable Government had been established; but before the Powers had time to recognize it, this authority also was superseded by the Dictatorship of Kolchak; and at the present writing, Semenoff, operating in the Cheta region, withholds his allegiance and it is only the restraining influence of the Allies that keeps them from going at each other's throats!

Since the Bolsheviks have been driven out, the conditions have been getting steadily worse economically; and coupling to this the fact that a large portion of the people are Bolshevik at heart, it is not to be wondered at that a minority at least sigh for the good old Bolshevik days. There have been many signs of Bolshevik reaction. They are always put down with a heavy hand, but the spirit is there nevertheless.

The absence of any settled Allied policy further complicates the situation. The nations do not seem to have got together on any settled principle; and some nationalities are working at cross purposes. Dozens of times the railroad has been on the point of being turned over to the American engineers, but someone held up the ar-

rangement. There is any amount of secret diplomacy carried on, but as yet, no one has called for an open show-down.

SOCIAL DEMORALIZATION

The social life of Siberia bears no resemblance to what it was before the war. Hundreds and thousands have fled from Russia proper, to take refuge here, and naturally they are not of the Bolshevik turn of mind, but rather lean to the bureaucratic type. They are chiefly former Government employees, army officers, owners of estates, university professors, and wealthy merchants. The sad thing is, that they do not seem to have learned anything from the cataclysm that has overwhelmed their land. Instead of studying the underlying causes for the tremendous hold Bolshevism has taken on the masses, they simply look at its present manifestations, which are horrible enough in all conscience, and then their souls are filled with the one desire for revenge.

Bolshevism has been discredited on account of its evil-minded and dishonest leaders, who have led the movement into all forms of foolishness, cruelty and excess; but the man is very short-sighted and unwise who maintains that there is nothing higher behind it. In its essence and as the common Russian peasant or worker sees it, it is a tremendous protest against the real injustice and cruelty which he has suffered for ages at the hand of the capital classes. This is the fundamental reason why this movement has held on so long and been so tenacious of life, and the individual, or group, or government which refuses to take this point into consideration will have a hard time of it.

There is quite a strong tendency in Siberia today toward the reestablishment of the monarchy and there are many indications that if it is established things will be

run very much on the old lines. When I was in Tomsk, I was told on good authority that a threatened uprising of the peasants had been subdued in the old fashioned way; by the use of the knout and by indiscriminate executions. Society is divided into many factions, each bitter against the other, none wishing to learn where his own philosophy could be changed for the better or his methods of life modified, and each one filled with hatred of the other, only waiting for an opportunity to do some violence to the one who disagrees with him.

RELIGIOUS DISORGANIZATION

In normal times the Orthodox Church was second in influence only to the Government itself, in fact it was an integral part of the Government, and as is almost certainly to be the case of such establishments it was controlled by the influence which closely coincided with those dominating the old bureaucracy. It is needless to say that the Church is anti-Bol'shevik; but it probably would have been opposed to any democratic movement on the part of the common people even if such a movement took a moderate course and did not manifest itself under such hideous forms as the present uprising.

The Russian people are essentially religious, by nature, and while all other organizations have been attacked, there does not seem to have been any definite menace to the Church itself except that it has been disestablished. While there has been no concerted assault on the Church yet in numberless individual cases, pillage, intimidation, and personal violence have been committed. Be the cause what it may, the Church which has been one of the great steadying forces in Russia, has lost its hold on the people. They claim that it has always stood for reaction; and has been, and is today, more sympathetic toward the upper classes than toward the lower.

JEWISH INFLUENCE

Wherever the Jewish influence dominates the Bolsheviks, the Church of course, cannot expect sympathy or good will. This problem of the Jewish influence among the Bolsheviks may as well be mentioned here as elsewhere. Undoubtedly many of the leaders are Jews gathered since the revolution from all over the world; rightly or wrongly, the classes of Russians who are suffering, attribute a large portion of their misfortune to Jewish intrigue. The Jew was never loved by the Russian but this hatred has become greatly intensified lately and if ever the upper classes get control again, there will be absolutely no place left for the Jew in Russia.

THE CZECHO-SLOVAK SITUATION

The history of the Czecho-Slovak intervention is so well known that there is no need of going into detail here, except to recall the fact that they were going through Siberia on their way to the French front, when they were held up by the Bolsheviks and compelled to fight their way through. They were then held in Siberia by the Allies, who made them all sorts of promises which they haven't kept. The Czecho-Slavs are at present in a very dissatisfied mood. They feel that the war is over, and they are anxious to get home to their families and to the great task of rehabilitating their country. They cannot leave without the consent of the Allies, as this would endanger their whole future national aspirations. Their military accomplishments have been simply marvelous; but they themselves acknowledge that the morale of their men is weakening. If they should withdraw, there would be simply pandemonium let loose. Probably a considerable portion of the population would be murdered by the Bolsheviks who would immediately overrun this region.



A STREET BARRICADE IN A RUSSIAN CITY AT THE TIME OF A BOLSHEVIK UPRISING

The forces the Allies have in Siberia today are insignificant and their position would be untenable were it not for the presence of the Czecho-Slavs; but these have lost a considerable number of their men from sickness and fatalities in battle. When the Spring opens, and taking for granted that the Bolsheviks will still have kept up their organizations, the Czecho-Slavs will need more aid from the Allies than they have received up to the present.

CONCLUSION

When conditions are so bad, and the issues at stake are so serious as they are in Siberia today, it is difficult to suggest a remedy, but it seems self-evident that the two alternatives open are for the Allies either to withdraw or to stay on.

It would seem practically impossible for them to withdraw, as their doing so would turn the country over to a most terrible orgy of destruction and bloodshed. Some claim that the purpose of the intervention has been accomplished, viz., the saving of the Czechs; the protection of the large military stores from falling into the hands of the Bolsheviks; and the holding up of the large forces of German-Austrian prisoners who were being organized to start a new German Eastern front. They ignore the fact that although all these objects have been accomplished, yet by their very accomplishment, the Allies have been compelled to take upon themselves new and almost more important duties, namely, the protection of the people who have taken refuge within their lines, and the establishment of some secure protecting Government for both these refugees and for the original inhabitants.

All my observations and the result of all my conversations with individuals who know the situation thoroughly, make me feel most strongly that the only thing to be done

is for the Allies actually to intervene, not as they have done in the past, but with an intervention that should be effective.

The first thing necessary is for the Allies to adopt some settled policy. At present, no one seems to know what they are doing or what they wish to do.

The second demand is for *political stability* and this, it seems to me, cannot be secured until Siberia is really occupied by sufficient military forces to guarantee this stability. It seems useless to expect this power to originate with the Russians. Since I have been writing this, a report has come from Omsk, the seat of the Siberian Government, that there has been a Bolshevik uprising in which certain troops of the newly organized Siberian Russian army participated. The report states that they released the prisoners, the larger portion of whom were Bolsheviks, and that the uprising was put down "with severity," thereby no doubt adding to the already bitter class-feeling.

The third demand is for a stable finance. Nothing on a very extensive scale can be done for the economic regeneration of Siberia until a medium of exchange is established which will have a *real* and permanent value, which will not depend, as does all the money now in circulation, on some lucky turn of the wheel of fortune or some beneficent arrangement of the Allies which will take place some time in the indefinite future. The Allies will either have to stand back of this issue or else take over some public utility which will be able, immediately at least, to carry the interest on the loan and eventually to pay up the principal, and this leads us to the

Fourth demand; *actual control of the Trans-Siberian Railway*. The country cannot steady down until this vital travel artery is restored to normal activity and it cannot be restored by any local physician. The Road must

be renovated from one end to the other. There must be authoritative control so that it will be made a source of revenue as well as the feeder for the people and industries of this vast region. At present it accomplishes neither purpose. And without the military occupation, it would be useless to make the attempt.

Siberia is a wonderful country and has a splendid natural future before it, but unless the Powers intervene with some drastic measures, its progress will be delayed for years if not for decades.

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